

REMARKS

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the abstract and the specification has been amended to overcome the objections raised by the examiner on page 2 of the Office Action.

The claims have been amended to obviate the various rejections set forth in numbered paragraphs 1-10 bridging pages 2-4. Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

The examiner's indication that claims 1-6 are free of the prior art is appreciatively acknowledged.

It is believed that the above noted amendments to the claims have obviated the various rejections under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 and accordingly it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Submitted herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement citing US Patent 2, 565, 454, which was cited in the Supplementary European Search report.

It is submitted that the present claims are patentable over the disclosure of this patent.

Accordingly, the present application is in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration and prompt notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

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1. (Amended) A smoking method comprising the steps of:

introducing smoke into a chamber (11) having opposite ends thereof formed with an inlet (11a) and an exit (11b), an electrically insulative curtain (18) being attached thereto, respectively,

transporting grounded [works] foods (19) at a predetermined speed into said chamber (11) by transporting means (12), said [works] foods (19) comprising farm products, marine products and livestock products or processed foods thereof, and applying a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between a pair of electrode plates (13, 14) disposed along said transporting means (12) within said chamber (11) so as to interpose the [works] foods (19) between said pair of electrode plates (13, 14) [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage.

2. (Amended) A smoking method comprising the steps of:

introducing smoke into a chamber (71) containing therein [works] foods (19) and electrode plates (73, 74) alternately arranged with each other at predetermined intervals, and

applying a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between said electrode plates (73, 74) or between the [works] foods (19), [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage.

3. (Amended) A smoking method comprising the steps of:

introducing smoke into a chamber (91) containing therein first and second electrodes (111, 112) arranged at predetermined intervals, and electrically connecting first and second [electrodes] foods (101, 102) to said first and second electrodes (111, 112), respectively, and applying a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between said first and second electrodes (111, 112) [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage.

4. (Amended) A smoking method of [any one] any one of claims 1 through 3, wherein the distance between [adjacent electrode plate and work] the electrode plate and foods being adjacent to the electrode plate or between adjacent [electrode plate] foods is 20 mm to 100 mm.

5. (Amended) A smoking apparatus comprising:

a chamber (11) having opposite ends thereof formed with an inlet (11a) and an exit (11b), an electrically insulative curtain (18) being attached thereto, respectively,

transporting means (12) moved into said chamber (11) from said inlet (11a) toward said exit (11b), and [adapted to transport] for transporting a plurality of [works] foods (19) spaced at predetermined intervals, the [works] foods (19) comprising farm products, marine products and livestock products or processed foods thereof,

a pair of electrode plates (13, 14) disposed within said chamber (11) at predetermined distances from the [works] foods (19), respectively, along the longitudinal direction of said transporting means (12) so as to interpose the [works] foods (19) between said pair of electrode plates (13, 14),

smoke generating means (16, 196) for generating smoke to be adhered to and infiltrated into the [works] foods (19), and for introducing the smoke into said chamber (11), and

a high voltage generating circuit (17, 127, 147, 167) adapted to apply a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between said pair of electrode plates (13, 14) [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage, and [adapted to ground the works] to ground the foods (19).

6. (Amended) A smoking apparatus comprising:

supporting tools (71a) disposed within a chamber (71) [and adapted to support] for supporting a plurality of [works] foods (19) at predetermined intervals, respectively,

a plurality of electrode plates (73, 74) disposed between said [works] foods (19) supported by said supporting tools (71a), at predetermined distances from the {works} foods (19), respectively.

smoke generating means (16, 196) for generating smoke to be adhered to and infiltrated into the [works] foods (19), and for introducing the smoke into said chamber (71), and

a high voltage generating circuit (17, 127, 147, 167) [adapted to apply] for applying a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between said plurality of electrode plates (73, 74) or between the plurality of [works] foods (19) [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage.

7. (Amended) A smoking apparatus comprising:

first electrodes (111) disposed within a chamber (91), and electrically connected to a plurality of first [works] foods (101), respectively,

second electrodes (112) disposed within said chamber (91), each of second electrodes disposed between said first electrodes (111) at predetermined distances from said first electrodes (111) and electrically connected to a plurality of second [works] foods (102),

smoke generating means (16, 196) for generating smoke to be adhered to and infiltrated into the first and second [works] foods (101, 102), and for introducing the smoke into said chamber (91), and

a high voltage generating circuit (17, 127, 147, 167) adapted to apply a DC voltage or AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV between said first and second electrodes (111, 112) [so as not to start discharge] under the starting voltage.

8. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7, wherein the distance between [the adjacent electrode plate and work] the electrode plate and foods being adjacent to the electrode plate or between adjacent [works] foods is 20 mm to 100 mm.

9. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7, wherein said high voltage generating circuit (17) includes a single transformer (17a) for boosting the commercial frequency voltage up to an AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV, wherein opposite ends of a secondary coil (17c) of said transformer (17a) are electrically connected to electrode plates (13, 14) or to [works] foods (19), respectively, and

wherein one end of an intermediate tapping electric wire (47) having the other end electrically connected to the [works] foods (19) or to said electrode plates (13, 14) is electrically connected to an intermediate portion of said secondary coil (17c).

10. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7, wherein said high voltage generating circuit (127) includes identical first and second transformers (121, 122) for boosting the commercial frequency voltage up to an AC voltage of 7 kV to 15 kV,

wherein one ends of secondary coils (121b, 122b) of said first and second transformers (121, 122) are electrically connected to electrode plates or to [works] foods, respectively, and

wherein the other ends of said secondary coils (121b, 122b) of said first and second transformers (121, 122) are electrically connected to [works] foods or to electrode plates, respectively, via common electric wire (123).

11. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of claim 9 [or 10],

wherein said intermediate tapping electric wire (47) or said common electric wire (123) is provided with a diode (52a, 53a) for rectifying the electric current flowing through said intermediate tapping electric wire (47) or said common electric wire (123).

12. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7,

wherein said smoke generating means (16) includes a hopper (22) for storing a smoking material (21),

a screw conveyor (23) for transporting the smoking material (21),

a burn heater (24) for incompletely burning the smoking material (21) transported by said screw conveyor (23), to thereby generate smoke, and

a smoke inlet (26a) for introducing the smoke into said chamber (11).

14. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7, further comprising:

smoke circulating means (77, 97) for circulating the smoke introduced into said chamber (71, 91),

wherein said smoke circulating means (77, 97) comprises:

a circulation duct (78, 98) having opposite ends communicated to an upper part and a lower part of said chamber (71, 91), respectively, and

a fan (99) disposed within said circulation duct (78,98) for drawing the smoke at the upper level within said chamber (71, 91) into the upper end of said circulation duct (78, 98) and [to discharge] for discharging the smoke from the lower end of said circulation duct (78, 98) into said chamber (71, 91).

15. (Amended) A smoking apparatus of [anyone] any one of claims 5 through 7, wherein condiments are added into a liquid (57c) within a tank (57b) of a humidifier (57) for keeping the humidity within said chamber (11) constant.